

NEWS RELEASE

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Central Figure in Springfield Cocaine Distribution Conspiracy Pleads Guilty ***More than 5 Kilos Distributed***

Springfield, IL – Danny Sidener Jr., age 27, of Taylorville, Illinois, pled guilty today to supplying more than five kilograms of cocaine for distribution in Springfield and central Illinois from 2004 to October 2005. Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that Sidener pled guilty to the four offenses charged by a federal grand jury on November 17, 2005: conspiracy to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine; distribution of 500 grams or more of cocaine; use of a telephone to facilitate a drug offense; and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. In addition, Sidener agreed to forfeiture of various parcels of real estate in Springfield and Taylorville.

During a hearing this morning before U.S. District Judge Jeanne E. Scott, Sidener admitted that he profited financially from his conspiracy with Michael Mohan, Peter Sidener, Earl Sidener and others to distribute powder cocaine in central Illinois. Sidener admitted he obtained a supply of more than five kilograms of cocaine from outside the Springfield area, and thereafter sold or “fronted” it on a consignment basis to others for distribution. On October 28, 2005, Sidener used a cellular telephone to arrange his delivery of approximately 1,500 grams of powder cocaine to co-conspirator Michael Mohan’s home in the 1200 block of Leland Avenue. A federal search warrant was subsequently executed at the residence and the cocaine was recovered. Sidener was arrested following the cocaine delivery on October 28, 2005. During a search of his vehicle, law enforcement officers found a 9mm revolver and 16 rounds of 9mm ammunition.

Danny Sidener further agreed to criminal forfeiture of properties derived from proceeds of the criminal offenses including two properties in Taylorville - 905 West Waco and 816 West Franklin, and five in Springfield - 610 South Illinois; 2307 South 12 Street; and, 2315, 2319, and 2323 South Sixth Street.

Sentencing is scheduled for February 26, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. Pending sentencing, Sidener remains in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service. The statutory mandatory minimum penalty is 10 years to life in prison for conspiracy to distribute five or more kilograms of cocaine and for distribution of more than 500 grams of cocaine. The penalty for possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime is a mandatory minimum five years to life in prison. For using a telephone to facilitate a drug offense, the penalty is no more than four years in prison.

(More)

The charges result from an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Springfield Police Department, the Illinois State Police and the Central Illinois Enforcement Group. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John E. Childress.

In addition to Sidener, since October 2005, eight other defendants have been charged in separate, related cases with conspiring to distribute cocaine in Springfield and central Illinois. Seven of the defendants have entered pleas of guilty and are scheduled for sentencing as follows: Adam Martin - November 27, 2006; William Thomas - November 6, 2006; Gerald Vondebur - December 11, 2006; Michael Mohan - November 20, 2006; Earl V. Sidener - January 8, 2007; Jerrad Pruitt - December 18, 2006; and Dondi McIntosh - December 11, 2006.

Defendant Peter Sidener is scheduled for a final pre-trial conference on November 20, 2006. Trial is scheduled for December 5, 2006. Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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